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TAGS: [NATO PREL MOPS GG RS UP](#)
SUBJECT: NATO-RUSSIA: CONSENSUS EMERGING FOR NRC
MINISTERIAL IN JUNE

REF: USNATO 191

Classified By: DCM John Heffern for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C/NF) In the May 27 NATO-Russia Council (NRC) meeting, Russian Ambassador Rogozin chided Allies for playing political games with the proposed date of the NRC Foreign Ministerial meeting. Rogozin groused that Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov agreed to NATO's proposed May 19 date for the Ministerial, only to have the date withdrawn because "Secretary Clinton had to meet with the Israelis." DCM Heffern pushed back, explaining that scheduling issues had prevented the U.S. from agreeing with the May 19 date, adding there was no intended political signal. He said the U.S. supports holding the NRC Foreign Ministerial before the summer break (i.e., in June). In a second intervention, an assuaged Rogozin equivocated and seemed open to a NRC FM meeting in June. (NOTE: This is a change in the Russian position. The Russian mission indefinitely postponed the NRC FM meeting in response to the April 29 NATO expulsion of two Russian diplomats for espionage (reftel). END NOTE.) A number of Allies, including Germany, Italy, and France, voiced strong support for holding the FM meeting before the summer break.

¶2. (C/NF) Rogozin said unequivocally that NATO-Russia military cooperation could not resume until after Foreign Ministers had met and provided political guidance for such cooperation. UK Charge Flaherty asked how this logic would affect possible Russian participation in a NATO June 11-12 Defense Ministerial meeting. Without directly responding to the question, Rogozin said the NRC Foreign Ministerial was the first step in NRC re-engagement. After the meeting, the NATO International Staff said it was dropping a notional NRC meeting from the Defense Ministerial agenda due to Rogozin's intervention.

¶3. (C/NF) In a May 28 informal Ambassadorial meeting, several Allies lamented the optics of holding an important NATO meeting on the margins of the OSCE Ministerial in Corfu. There was widespread agreement, however, that it was important to offer Russia a date for the NRC FM meeting early this summer. A solid consensus is emerging for an NRC FM meeting in June.
DAALDER